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U. S. Department

Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, March 21, 1929.

Not for Publication

Subject: "Variety in Breakfast Menus."

Bulletin available: "Home Baking."

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"It's good to be home again," said Uncle Ebenezer, pouring maple sirup over a hot buttered waffle. "It's good to be home again, eating a well-cooked breakfast."

"You flatter me," I replied. "Didn't you have well-cooked breakfasts at Elmira's?"

"Yes, and no. Elmira means well, but she pays no attention to details. If she gets up a little later than usual, she serves breakfast on the bare kitchen table. If she's in a hurry, she doesn't take time to cut grapefruit, as you do. Her husband doesn't seem to mind, however; I suppose he's used to lukewarm coffee, thick toast, and poorly cooked cereal. Elmira always forgot to salt the oatmeal," said Uncle Ebenezer.

"Did she have oatmeal every day?"

"No, every other day. Oatmeal one day, and toast the next. Not much variety in Elmira's meals. She says she doesn't like to cook, because cooking is a bore. Do you think cooking is a bore?"

"Oh, once in a while," I admitted. "I suppose every big job grows monotonous, at times. But I'm interested in the effect of Elmira's slipshod breakfasts, on her husband. You say he doesn't mind them?"

"Well," said Uncle Ebenezer, blushing slightly, "once or twice -- or maybe it was three times -- we did tell Elmira not to bother to cook breakfast for us. We ate at a restaurant, on the avenue. Good food, too -- well seasoned, and hot, and plenty of it. May I have another cup of coffee? And another waffle? It's certainly good to be home again, Aunt Sammy."

Uncle Ebenezer ate another hot waffle, and then went to work. While I washed the dishes, I concentrated on the subject of breakfasts, and how to achieve variety in this important meal.

Speaking of breakfasts in general, a person's daily food depends largely on his occupation. A man who chops wood all day needs more food, and different food, than a man who sits at a desk. The woodchopper, exercising in the open air, can digest heavy foods in large quantities. The sedentary worker, a bookkeeper for instance, who rides to and from work -- requires easily digested foods, in smaller amounts.

As we have said before, in our meal-planning talks, the common foods may be divided into five groups, according to their composition and uses. These five groups are: 1, vegetables and fruits; 2, meat, milk, and other foods depended on for complete, or efficient protein; 3, cereals; 4, sugar and sugary foods; and 5, fats and fat foods.

A well-balanced diet is a combination of these five food groups in the proper proportions. This does not mean that we must serve one food from each group, at every meal. We could probably get by for some time, if one group was omitted altogether. It's been done, on a bread and water diet. But in the long run, a meal, a day's ration, or a weekly food supply in which each food group is represented, is likely to provide everything needed to make the diet wholesome and attractive. All the foods mentioned in these five groups furnish body fuel, or material to keep up its temperature. As a general rule, the first group, or vegetables and fruits, furnish about $1/5$ of the fuel; the meat, eggs, milk, and similar foods, $1/4$; the cereal foods, $1/4$; sweets, $1/10$; and fats, $1/5$.

Do you think I'm straying far from the subject of breakfasts? Not at all -- I wanted to say something about balanced meals before I give you the breakfast menus suggested by the Bureau of Home Economics. These meals are for a family consisting of a man and a woman, both doing moderately active muscular work, and three children, under twelve years of age. Let's begin with a menu for Sunday, and go on through the week:

Sunday -- Oranges, French toast, coffee or tea for the grown-ups, and milk for the children.

Monday -- Baked apples, breakfast cereal with milk, bacon, bread or toast with butter, coffee or tea for the grown-ups, and milk for the children.

Tuesday -- Sliced bananas, ready-to-serve breakfast cereal and cream, soft-cooked eggs, bread or toast with butter, beverage.

Wednesday -- Grapefruit, fried mush with bacon, beverage.

Thursday -- Fried apples and thin slices of ham, hot biscuits, beverage.

Friday -- Stewed prunes, waffles and honey-butter, beverage. The honey-butter is a combination of butter and strained honey, creamed together.

Saturday -- Canned peaches, breakfast cereal with cream, chipped beef on toast, toast with butter, beverage.

You will note that fruit has been included every day. Fruit, fresh or cooked, stimulates the appetite, and makes one enjoy the rest of the meal. It supplies necessary vitamins and minerals, too. At this season of the year, we have the home-canned fruits, such dried fruits as prunes, peaches, apricots, and figs, and such fresh fruits as grapefruit, oranges, apples, and bananas. A tart, fresh applesauce is good for breakfast. Prunecots, a combination of stewed prunes and apricots, make a good dried fruit combination.

Some people seem to think that breakfast is a synonym for "bacon and eggs." But the eggs need not always be fried. A richly browned, fluffy omelet is an appetizing breakfast dish. Poached eggs served on a slice of crisp toast, are tasty, especially with a slice or two of bacon.

My family is particularly fond of cooked cereal, with chopped dates or seedless raisins sprinkled on top. They like fried hominy grits with maple sirup or honey, too.

As for breakfast breads, it is not necessary to serve toast, or waffles or pancakes, every morning. I vary the bread part of the menu by serving hot biscuits; corn muffins; graham muffins; toasted English muffins; cornbread, split, buttered, and toasted; spoon bread; and toasted nut bread.

I find that it's much more pleasant to cook, if I vary the menus. Cooking the same meal, over and over, is as uninteresting as reading the same story, day after day.

There are three requests which fit into the breakfast program; requests for griddle cake, waffle, and muffin recipes. You'll find all these, and many more, in the bulletin called "Home Baking." This bulletin is a practical text on the subject of baking everything from yeast bread to angel food cake, and pie crust. It contains two or three dozen recipes.

I suggest that you send for the bulletin right away. In the meantime, if you want my waffle recipe, I can give it to you. Having made waffles only this morning, the recipe is fresh in my mind. Let me see -- there are seven ingredients in the recipe:

1 1/2 cups milk	3 teaspoons baking powder
2 cups sifted soft-wheat flour	1 1/2 tablespoons sugar, and
3 tablespoons fat	3/4 teaspoon salt
1 or 2 eggs	

Now let's see if I can give you the list again, in the same order: (Repeat).

First, mix the dry ingredients, that is, the flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt. Then add the milk, and the egg yolks, and the melted fat. Lastly, fold in the beaten whites of the eggs. Have the waffle iron hot enough to brown the waffle quickly, and well greased, unless it is the electrically heated aluminum kind. In that case, add an extra tablespoon of melted shortening to the batter.

Tomorrow -- well, we'll see what's on the program, when tomorrow comes. I'm sure, however, that there's a menu, and a recipe for Floating Island.

